UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/53/156
9 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 110 (*c*)

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/625/Add.3)*]

53/156. Situation of human rights in Rwanda

The General Assembly,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the International Bill of Human Rights,[1] the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide[2] and other applicable human rights and humanitarian law standards,

Recalling its resolution 52/146 of 12 December 1997 and other relevant resolutions, and taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/69 of 21 April 1998,[3]

Reaffirming that effective action to prevent further violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms must be a central and integral element of the overall Rwandan and United Nations responses to the situation in Rwanda and that a strengthened human rights component is indispensable to national reconciliation and reconstruction in Rwanda,

---

[1] See resolutions 217 A (III), 2200 A (XXI), annex, and 44/128, annex.

[2] Resolution 260 A (III).

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

1. *Takes note* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda[4] and the report of the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Rwanda,[5] and refers also to the relevant reports of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences[6] and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the independence of judges and lawyers;[7]

2. *Reiterates its strong condemnation* of the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity committed in Rwanda in 1994;

3. *Expresses deep concern* at the continuing serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the country, in particular those associated with the conflict in the north-west, and in regard to conditions of detention and the trial process of those accused of genocide and crimes against humanity;

4. *Urges* all States to cooperate fully, without delay, with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994, taking into account the obligations set forth in Security Council resolutions 955 (1994) of 8 November 1994 and 978 (1995) of 27 February 1995, and encourages the Secretary-General to facilitate the activities of the International Tribunal for Rwanda to the greatest extent possible;

5. *Commends* the International Tribunal for Rwanda for the progress made in its work, and urges the Tribunal to find further ways to speed up its proceedings;

6. *Deeply regrets* that no agreement could be reached on a new mandate for the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, which consequently led to the withdrawal of the Field Operation from Rwanda on 28 July 1998;

7. *Welcomes* the decision of the Government of Rwanda to create a National Human Rights Commission, and urges the Government to take appropriate action to enable the Commission to be fully established and to begin functioning independently in accordance with the international principles relating to the development of independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights;

8. *Encourages* further efforts by the Government of Rwanda to undertake a broad public debate aimed at further strengthening the functioning and independence of the National Human Rights Commission, urges the Government to work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to facilitate the debate, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue to provide appropriate assistance;

---

[4] A/53/367, annex.

[5] A/53/402, annex.

[6] E/CN.4/1998/54/Add.1.

[7] E/CN.4/1998/39.

9. *Supports and encourages* continued efforts by the Government of Rwanda to prosecute violations committed by some elements of its armed forces, and in this context notes with interest the reinforcement of the Military Prosecutor's Department, which will increase the capacity of the Rwandan Patriotic Army to conduct internal investigations and bring accused persons to trial;

10. *Urges* the Government of Rwanda to give the utmost priority to the prosecution and punishment of crimes of sexual violence committed against women, in line with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences;

11. *Encourages* the Government of Rwanda to further ensure the independence of the judiciary and, with the support of the international community, to strengthen the capacity of the judicial system, particularly taking additional steps to ensure full respect of fair trial guarantees, as required by Rwandan law, article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[8] and other international safeguards;

12. *Welcomes* the continuation of trials of those suspected of genocide and crimes against humanity in Rwanda and the improvements that have been made in the trial process, particularly the expedition of the initial stages of prosecution;

13. *Reiterates its appeal* to the international community to provide assistance to the Government of Rwanda to help to strengthen the protection of genocide survivors and witnesses, and the administration of justice, including with regard to adequate access to legal representation, to prosecute those responsible for genocide and other violations of human rights and to promote the rule of law in Rwanda, and notes with appreciation the assistance already provided by the donor community;

14. *Welcomes and encourages* the release of minors, elderly prisoners, prisoners suffering from terminal illnesses and suspects with incomplete files, who were detained for their alleged involvement in genocide and other abuses of human rights, and urges the Government of Rwanda to establish adequate measures to facilitate the reintegration of released persons into society;

15. *Reiterates its concern* at the conditions in most communal detention centres and prisons, emphasizes the need for greater attention and resources to be directed to that problem and encourages the Government of Rwanda to continue to look for pragmatic solutions to allow for an increase of the number of prisoners being released and reintegrated into society, and again urges the international community to assist the Government of Rwanda in that area;

16. *Expresses its appreciation* to Governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and non-governmental organizations, which have supported the Government of Rwanda in the area of human rights, and encourages further joint efforts of the Government of Rwanda and other Governments, the High Commissioner and non-governmental organizations in the area of human rights within mutually agreed frameworks of cooperation, taking into account, *inter alia*, the five-point plan of the Government of Rwanda, which includes the following priority areas, as outlined in the report of the Special Representative[9] (a) training national human rights monitors; (b) initiating human rights education programmes in formal and informal education; (c) providing the National Human Rights Commission with the necessary financial and technical assistance; (d) initiating a human rights public-awareness campaign using media resources; and (e) establishing a national centre for human rights as an information clearing house and training centre;

---

[8] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[9] See A/53/402, para. 18.

17. *Encourages* continued cooperation among the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights and the Government of Rwanda;

18. *Decides* to keep the situation of human rights in Rwanda under consideration at its fifty-fourth session, in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council.

85th plenary meeting
9 December 1998